

## “The Secret Demon”

### Sexual Addiction in the Church

by Dan Leaf

### FINDING HOPE Heavenly Options for Pain and Emptiness

### A 12-Step Recovery Support Group

#### Sexual Addiction in the Church

You might look at a Sunday morning church crowd and say, “Surely these people don’t have problems, especially with sexual addictions.” Consider these statistics from a 1995 survey by Patrick Means (*Men’s Secret Wars*, Revell, 1996, page 255). “Out of 350 men (10% pastors, 90% key laymen from 12 denominations), 64% struggle with sexual addiction or sexual compulsion including, but not limited to, use of pornography, compulsive self-gratification, or other secret sexual activity. 25% of married Christian men have had an affair since becoming a Christian.”

In an article called, “*Sexual Addiction and Compulsively*” in *The Journal of Treatment and Prevention*, Spring 2000, based on a 1998 survey of 9,265 adults, Dr. Alvin Cooper and others stated, “Sex is the number one reason adult Americans use the Internet. One-third of all visits are to sexually oriented web sites, chat rooms and news groups. Half of cybersex addicts are men, half are women, with men preferring pornography pictures and women preferring sexually explicit chat rooms. (23% of women, however, said they preferred pictures). Although this set of statistics is from a broader base than just Christians, the statistics for Christian Internet users will not be significantly different.” (Ouch!)

We live in a society that says, “If it feels good, do it.” Or, “I deserve to be happy and this makes me happy.” Does it really feel good after the euphoric feeling goes away and the shame and guilt come upon us? Does that which is destroying our lives really make us happy?

You might ask yourself, “Why would someone need to write about sexual addiction in the church?”

**We know what the Bible teaches about this subject.** In I Corinthians 6:9-11, “*Don’t you know that those who do wrong will have no share in the Kingdom of God? Don’t fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, who are idol worshipers, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, greedy people, drunkards, abusers, and swindlers — none of these will have a share in the Kingdom of God. There was a time when some of you were just like that, but now your sins have been washed away, and you have been set apart for God. You have been made right with God because of what the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God have done for you.* Paul was talking about those who were involved in sexual addiction before their new life in Christ. A little later he talks to Christians who are continuing in this practice. In I Cor 6:17-19 he says, “*But the person who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Run away from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. Or don’t you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself.*” If we know all of this, why do we continue acting out in this way?

**Knowing is not enough.** Addiction has a strong hold, even in the life of a Christian. Paul states in Romans 7:19-20, “*When I want to do good, I don’t. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. 20 But if I am doing what I don’t want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin within me is doing it.*” This is the way addiction works. We do not want to act out with unhealthy romantic fantasies,

dependent relationships, or sexual addictions, but the pain and emptiness (holes in our life) become so great that we act out regardless of the promises we've made, regardless of the shame, guilt or consequences.

**The Secret Demon.** Exposure is what gives the demon life. The easiest way to explain it is that exposure to sexual stimulation produces chemicals that the brain craves (our sexual feelings), thus producing a "high." That feeling is something the brain will want again and again. The more the brain gets, the more it wants. The mind continues to obsess until it's satisfied. The more we yield, the more it takes to create that "high." It becomes a full grown demon that must be satisfied regardless of the consequences mentally, physically, socially, or spiritually. It does not matter if it destroys jobs, relationships, families, or even marriages. Sexual addiction, like all addictions, escalates. To start with, the person has an addiction, but before long, the addiction has the person.

**There are three levels of the sexual addict demon.** The First Level includes behaviors that many in our society consider socially acceptable or tend to turn their heads and ignore such as: indecency, adultery, pornography, and self-gratification, etc. The Second Level includes socially unacceptable acts, misdemeanor offences or they may be classified as mental disorders such as: child molesters, sadism, masochism, voyeurism, exhibitionism. The Third Level includes criminal or assaultive behavior such as: child molestation, incest, and rape. We can stay in one level for many years, but it constantly requires more and more to satisfy the demon.

**Some of those who have sexual addictions actually want to get caught.** The secret demon or secret war is so strong and the battle of good and evil so intense that the only way some can see that they can get relief is by allowing themselves to get caught. Sex addicts have been known to leave things around that would expose their double life and quiet the demon within.

**The path to quieting the demon** is to look into the root causes of the pain and emptiness. Many times addiction is a way of medicating or masking the issues of the past. Some of the issues of the past that must be dealt with are: abandonment, abuse, neglect, rejection, and insecurity. 82% of adult sex addicts have been sexually abused in childhood. In some families, there was no overt incest, but children were sexualized through early exposure to pornography or other stimulating sexual behaviors. "Don't Call It Love " Recovery From Sexual Addiction by Patrick Carnes (New York, Bantam Books, 1991); pages 42-44.

**Recovery - Freedom from the demon** can become a reality. There is HOPE The first step is by getting real and admitting that we have a problem, a demon that we cannot get rid of on our own. Admit it, "I need help!")

Hitting bottom is a term that is used in recovery. It implies that there is nowhere to go but up. We do not have to wait until our addiction destroys us utterly and completely, although there will always be consequences of our sins. We can get out at any time. God wants us back. He wants to heal our pain and fill our emptiness. The reason we feel separated from God is because of sin.

Of all addictions, sex addiction is the hardest to confess, but we must confess our problem to ourselves, to God, and then to someone who understands and will help us through our journey to recovery. It is the only way to free the demon. It was a long journey to get where we are today and it will be a hard journey home, but we can do it with the grace of God and the help of others. We need to seek a guide to help us through this process. FINDING HOPE is a Christian 12-step approach to sin recovery that may be of benefit to you in the journey of finding peace.

---

---

Finding HOPE  
A 12-Step Based Christian Support Group

Located in Room 107  
Sunday mornings 11:00 am. - 12:00 pm.  
Wednesday nights 7:00 pm. - 8:00 pm.

Southside Church of Christ  
2101 Hemphill St.  
Fort Worth, TX 76110  
Call (817) 923-8276  
dleaf@sscofc.org



HEAVENLY OPTIONS FOR PAIN AND EMPTINESS

published 2001 reprinted 2007